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1. The first step in the decisive attack against Rudolf Slansky and his companions was the liquidation of Marie Svermova, Ota Sling, Viteslav Fuchs and other Party officials who were known to be members of the Slansky group. The purpose of these first arrests was to lay the groundwork for the arrest of Slansky and to test the reaction of the Czechoslovak public in the event of his arrest. The psychological preparation of public opinion for Slansky's arrest involved constant discussion at Party meetings of the cases against Svermova, Sling, Fuchs, and other arrested Party members, with emphasis on their connections with the West.
2. [redacted] the Svermova case to the former Czechoslovak military attache 50X1-HUM in Rome, Major Arnost Silbiger, who knew Svermova very well from the days of his residence in the USSR. He emphatically denied that Svermova could be a traitor, and was convinced that her arrest was merely a political error which would be rectified. His interpretation of her arrest was that Sling deliberately tried to transfer blame to Svermova, thus hoping to save himself.
3. The Czechoslovak Ambassador in Rome, Dr. Miloslav Matousek, who was in Prague at that time, believed that Svermova was merely a victim of her own lack of political insight because she spoke too freely about confidential Party matters.

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4. The leading officials of the Italian Communist Party who knew Svermova well as a result of her political activity in the USSR and during her residence in Italy in the spring of 1948 were very surprised by her purge from the KSC and by her later arrest. Matteo Secchia, Edoardo d'Onofrio, and Vittorio Vidale voiced the opinion that perhaps it might be possible to accuse Svermova of a lack of political acumen, but that it was difficult to believe that she, as early as the time of her residence in Moscow, was a spy for the West. Matteo Secchia, at the request of his brother, Pietro Secchia, spoke to Bedrich Geminder in Prague about the Svermova case. Geminder was not able to give him any concrete news because the case was still being investigated.
5. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
[redacted] the activities of Svermova were under investigation, and that it was not at that time possible to publish the results of the investigation because a very extensive network was involved, and all aspects were not yet clear. [redacted]
[redacted] the future would reveal the extent of Svermova's 50X1-HUM participation in the activities of Sling.
6. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
7. The reaction of people of various political orientations in Czechoslovakia [redacted] fell into the following categories: 50X1-HUM
- a. Those who were hostile towards the present regime welcomed the arrest of Sling, Svermova, and companions as proof of inner conflicts within the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSC).
 - b. Those KSC members who tried to view the situation objectively were unpleasantly affected by the arrest of Svermova, because Svermova had a certain amount of popularity, especially among women. The published reasons for her arrest were not convincing enough fully to justify the action.
 - c. Those KSC members who adhered unquestioningly to the Party line merely parroted the reasons given by Vaclav Kopecky in the Central Committee (UV) of the KSC, making no attempt to explain them logically.
8. In contrast to this, the Sling case did not evoke from the public any particular reaction. Svermova was considered a victim of Sling.
9. The Czechoslovak deputy commercial attache in Rome, Josef Pliva, who was a member of the KSC in Brno and who came to Rome in August 1951, said that Sling was unpopular among Party members in the Brno region because of his dictatorial manner. Sling's attempt to build socialism rapidly and his failure to take into consideration the special conditions prevailing in the Brno region greatly contributed to his unpopularity. Sling's unpopularity was greatest among the farmers who were compelled by drastic measures to join the agricultural cooperatives (JZD). Even among factory workers, however, the position of Sling was not much better. He tried to introduce constantly higher labor norms, resulting in a decline of wages. These measures caused increasing unrest among the factory workers which resulted in several strikes in departments of Zbrojovka Brno, where Pliva was employed at that time. In several cases the KSC regional leaders in Brno were compelled to retreat from their position because the KSC factory organizations and the trade union organizations, under pressure from their members, were opposed to the measures advanced by Sling. For this reason Sling's removal and arrest provoked no unfavorable reaction in the Brno region; on the contrary, the action was well received.

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10. After the arrest of Svermova and Sling, a number of Party officials in various regions were arrested. All of these officials were known as collaborators of Slansky, and it was obvious then that the net around Slansky and his closest collaborators, who held important posts directly in the Central Secretariat of the Party, was being tightened slowly but surely.
11. Not only Gottwald, but also Zapotocky was interested in the removal of Slansky. Zapotocky supported Gottwald in this action. His reasons, however, were quite different from those of Gottwald.
12. Gottwald acted against Slansky chiefly to enhance his personal position. His goal was to seize undisputed power within the state, and to accomplish this goal he used methods similar to those of Stalin in liquidating opposition. Had Gottwald, in removing Slansky, advanced only the argument that Slansky and his group had tried to remove Gottwald, many people, even within the KSC, would have proclaimed Slansky as a national martyr who merely opposed the creating of a personal dictatorship by Gottwald. For the sake of public opinion, therefore, it was argued that Slansky was not only a traitor to the Party, but also a traitor to the country who had collaborated with the Western powers for the purpose of establishing a Titoist regime in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, after the arrest of Slansky the charge was advanced that "Slansky was an agent of the Western imperialists and had made preparations to flee to the West."
13. Gottwald dared to make such a direct attack against Slansky because he knew that Slansky's popularity among the Czechoslovak population was quite small because of his wholly pro-Soviet political orientation. Zapotocky, in one of his articles published in Prace prior to 1948, emphasized that although in building socialism in Czechoslovakia the examples and experiences of the USSR had to be followed, certain experiments could not be transferred blindly. He wrote that, in applying these principles, the specific conditions prevailing in Czechoslovakia had to be taken into consideration. Certain Party members of long standing blamed Slansky for not paying adequate attention to the special economic and political conditions existing in Czechoslovakia when applying Soviet methods, and felt that Czechoslovak production suffered because of this. This criticism was voiced by Dr. Velda Pithart, Deputy Minister of Industry; Eng. Dr. J. Jicinsky, director general of the Czechoslovak United Steel Works; Eng. K. Kabelle, coke industry specialist and director of the coke kilns at Kladno; Dora Smolkova; and several others.
14. Gottwald's accusation that Slansky and his collaborators were responsible for the failure of Czechoslovakia to fulfill the economic plan was an argument prepared for the benefit of Moscow which was of considerable importance. The USSR was dissatisfied because of the failure of Czechoslovakia to fulfill the Five-Year Plan, especially in the realms of heavy industry and agriculture, and hence to fulfill her obligation to deliver a specified amount of material to the USSR. Thus, upon Slansky and his companions was heaped the blame for the bad internal economic situation existing in Czechoslovakia. [redacted] no improvement in the economic conditions in Czechoslovakia over those of the fall of 1950. 50X1-HUM
15. Gottwald cleverly exploited the anti-Semitism existing in Czechoslovakia by branding Slansky as a Jewish cosmopolite. The purge of Slansky's group had some effect on almost all of the Jews in the Party; today only a small number of 50X1-HUM Jews hold their original positions. Anti-Semitism was stronger in Slovakia than in Bohemia and Moravia. [redacted] describe Slansky as the exponent of international Jewry, who appointed Jews irrespective of their bourgeois origin to all important administrative and production posts. [redacted] in no Slovak factory 50X1-HUM could a Jew be found doing manual labor and that every third director was of Jewish-Hungarian descent. [redacted] During the days of the First Republic, Jews in Slovakia were the main 50X1-HUM representatives of capitalism, and therefore Slovak workers continued to regard

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them as capitalists. The fact that the overwhelming majority of these Jews joined the Communist Party did not change the attitude of Slovaks toward them; the time span of their political transformation was too short to erase from the minds of Slovaks the association of Jews with capitalism. Thus, the anti-Semitism of Slovaks could not be regarded as based on racism; rather it had a Marxian basis, since the Jews prior to World War II were the main capitalist exploiters of the Slovak working class. In addition to this, Jews in Slovakia were also the chief propagators of Hungarianism, and thus, from the national point of view, were the enemies of the Slovak people.

16. [] similar opinions, though to a lesser degree, were also spreading among Czech Communists. 50X1-HUM

[] Knor, as Party instructor, encountered these views at many Party meetings and passed this information on to Minister of the Interior Vaclav Nosek, with whom he was in constant contact. Nosek could give no explanation of the sudden wave of anti-Semitic feeling.

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17. [] a logical explanation of the above could be that Gottwald deliberately supported the dissemination of anti-Semitism by his agents as one means of accelerating the downfall of Slansky and his adherents. 50X1-HUM
- If this explanation is correct, Gottwald was again merely acting according to the Soviet pattern since in the USSR Jews were also labelled class enemies and carriers of capitalism and were then liquidated.

18. [] the time when Slansky was removed from his post as Secretary General of the KSC and appointed a deputy premier of the Government. The public was not antagonized by Slansky's removal and accepted the news passively. 50X1-HUM

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- a. Zapotocky told [] that Slansky in his self-criticism had, for the most part, admitted the errors made by the KSC Secretariat and had stated that he was being given an opportunity to prove by his work that he personally was not guilty of those errors.
- b. Dora Smolkova, a pre-war member of the Party who had lived for some time in the USSR, thought that the removal of Slansky from his post as Secretary General of the KSC was only a step toward his total liquidation, after which control of the Party would pass to Gottwald and his followers. With reference to the role of Zapotocky in this action, Smolkova said that "Tonik" (Zapotocky) ceased to hold Slansky in esteem when Slansky adopted too dictatorial a policy on questions which were within the competence of the Government to decide. Smolkova expressed her apprehension lest one personal dictatorship (of Slansky and his followers) be replaced by another (of Gottwald and his followers), which would impair the prestige of the Party even more, not only in the eyes of the Czechoslovak people, but also in Moscow. Moscow, she said, already viewed with distrust everything that happened in Czechoslovakia. [] why she was so skeptical about the contemporary political situation, she replied that she had recently talked with leading Soviet trade union officials during their visit to Prague, and that they were not at all enthusiastic about what they saw in Czechoslovakia and made this known to Frantisek Zupka, the chairman of the Central Trade Union Council (URO). 50X1-HUM 50X1-HUM
- c. Dr. Matousek, Czechoslovak Ambassador in Rome, was very skeptical about the Slansky case. He stated that he did not quite understand what was happening, because Slansky's self-criticism, which was read at secret Party meetings, seemed to him unnatural, forced, and too superficial to give an indication of what was actually involved. Matousek was a good friend of Slansky since before the war, and had assisted, as an obstetrician, at the birth of Slansky's first child.

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d. F. Knor, mentioned above, (paragraph 16), was convinced that Slansky's liquidation was the work of Gottwald, but he was skeptical about the opinion, widely accepted at the time, that the victory of Gottwald meant the creation of a basis for so-called nationalistic communism. In his opinion, Moscow would never allow the development of such a tendency within Czechoslovakia under the prevailing international situation. On the contrary, Knor thought that the victory of Gottwald meant even closer attachment to the USSR.

e. People [] who were not Party members generally felt that with the removal of Slansky the worst "villain" in Czechoslovakia was gone, political persecution of non-Party citizens might decrease, and a partial detachment from the influence of Moscow would take place.

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19. From what has been said above it would follow that the general reaction to Slansky's arrest within the Party and among non-Party citizens within Czechoslovakia was not as unfavorable as may have been assumed abroad. A psychological preparation of public opinion for the liquidation of Slansky and his adherents had been made. Thus, Slansky had not been arrested in September 1951, since it was necessary to ascertain first what public reaction should be expected in the event of his arrest. He was arrested only when it became obvious that his followers were a minority and that no grave political consequence would result from his liquidation, and this was followed by the systematic arrest of all those who were suspected, even slightly, of being in his camp.

20. Slansky's arrest was followed by an upsurge of general nervousness in Czechoslovakia, which was reflected in a further decline of labor efficiency, both in agriculture and in industry, especially in coal, iron and steel production. The arrest of Slansky and of those under his influence failed to have a positive effect upon the Czechoslovak economy. Gottwald and Zapotocky face difficulties in explaining this situation to Moscow since it was one of their charges that Slansky was chiefly responsible for the economic situation in Czechoslovakia. It is probable that the purpose of the visit of Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Valerian A. Zorin to Prague in the spring of 1952 has been to investigate the above conditions in order to give Moscow a basis for necessary action.

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21. [] the official announcement of the arrest of Slansky, Geminder, and the others, provoked a greater response within the Cominform than within the KSC.

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22. In circles close to the Cominform in Italy, the news of the arrest of Slansky, and perhaps even more that of Geminder, was received with great surprise and with a certain amount of skepticism. Immediately after the arrest of Slansky and Geminder was announced, Pietro and Matteo Secchia asked [] for an explanation, as the arrest had not been expected.

[] it was therefore agreed that the Italian Communist Party (CPI) would send Matteo Secchia and Deputy Andivio³ to Prague and Moscow to ascertain on the spot what had happened, and to assure the security of the secret CPI archives which were being sent by Czechoslovak Embassy courier mail from Rome to Prague to Geminder.⁴ It was further agreed that Andivio, who knew Gottwald personally, would deal directly with Gottwald and would deliver to him a personal letter from Palmiro Togliatti. Pietro Secchia mentioned that a few days earlier he had received several letters signed by Geminder. He also stated that a translation into Italian of some of Slansky's writings concerning agricultural policy was being discussed. He was unable to understand how it was possible that Slansky, shortly before his arrest, had obtained one of the highest decorations of Czechoslovakia, and that, a few days prior to his arrest, publication was begun of an edition of his complete writings. In view of the confused situation, L'Unita was instructed to publish only the official announcement of the arrest as broadcast by Radio Prague and for the time being to refrain from any comment.

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23. The arrest of Slansky was more or less a surprise to the Soviet Embassy in Rome. [redacted] Kostylev felt that the most serious factor was that the warrant against Slansky had been signed by Zapotocky himself. Later, as news came in concerning the subsequent arrests of Slansky collaborators, Mikhailov always asked whether or not the person concerned was a Jew. He gradually gravitated toward the conviction that the purge within Czechoslovakia involved liquidation of the so-called Jewish cosmopolites. 50X1-HUM
24. [redacted] Kostylev openly declared his view that what was involved in the Slansky case was probably a large conspiracy of international Jewry against Czechoslovakia, and that the public trial, which he felt should be held as soon as possible, would show the Czechoslovak working people the issues at stake. [redacted] he hoped that there were no more Jews in the Czechoslovak Embassy in Rome. [redacted] the USSR had to fight similar difficulties, that these difficulties were only of a temporary nature which had been successfully overcome, and that this would certainly also be true in our case. 50X1-HUM 50X1-HUM
25. Matteo Secchia, after his five-week trip to Prague and Moscow, was not as optimistic as Kostylev. [redacted] the CPI archives were found to be in complete order and that he had spoken personally to Gottwald and had come to an agreement that the archives would continue to be sent to Prague. He had also come to an agreement with Gottwald about a list of CPI members who could in the future get Czechoslovak visas without previous consent of Prague, merely on the basis of a written request from Togliatti, Pietro Secchia or d'Onofrio (but not of Giuseppe di Vittorio). 50X1-HUM
26. As far as Slansky and Geminder were concerned, Matteo Secchia said he was assured by Gottwald that there was abundant, convincing evidence proving their guilt. This evidence was to be presented at a trial held during the second half of April 1952. 50X1-HUM
27. [redacted] it was difficult to ascertain who was to be blamed for the current economic and political situation. He stated that no economic improvement was apparent in Czechoslovakia, even after the liquidation of Slansky. In answer to a question concerning the validity of the charge that Slansky and Geminder were actually Western agents, Secchia replied that there were many types of so-called indirect collaboration from which a charge could be formulated. As far as Geminder was concerned, Secchia expressed his opinion that Geminder would not appear in the same trial with Slansky. The whole internal KSC situation was so complicated, he said, that a person did not know whom it was possible to believe. Therefore, CPI mail to the KSC which was transmitted by Czechoslovak diplomatic courier was to be addressed to the Foreign Department of the UV KSC, without indication of any individual addressee. Secchia said that the future chief of the Foreign Department of the UV KSC would probably be Antonin Novotny, but until the CPI received official notification of this, all mail would be addressed in the manner described above. 50X1-HUM 50X1-HUM
28. [redacted] Vidali, [redacted] declared frankly that he did not believe Slansky and Geminder were Western agents, since he knew them very well as a result of their previous activity in the Cominform. He said that they probably made certain political mistakes from which it would be possible to deduce Western connections. The trial against them would certainly be very interesting from a political point of view, but, if not well prepared, it would harm rather than benefit their accusers.
29. Dr. Matousek was very disturbed by Slansky's arrest. As his wife told mine, he expected his recall daily. After the subsequent arrest of Slansky's collaborators, especially after the arrest of General Jaroslav Prochazka and the removal of Ladislav Kopriwa as Minister of National Security, [redacted] he had ceased to understand all that was happening in Czechoslovakia since he had known personally most of the persons arrested. They had all worked for some time within the USSR, and there had never been the least suspicion that they were unfriendly toward the USSR. 50X1-HUM

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30. [redacted] Zapotocky, who signed the warrant against Slansky, was not motivated by personal interest as Gottwald was. Zapotocky was aware of the fact that Slansky and his group had seized most of the key positions both in the economic and political spheres, so that the Government was in a position inferior to that of the Secretariat of the Party. This naturally damaged the prestige of the Government in the eyes of the public. Things had progressed so far that general managers of Czechoslovak nationalized enterprises, in order to settle important matters, did not conduct their business with the ministry of the industry to which they were subordinate, but went directly to the Secretariat of the KSC, where the final decisions were made. [redacted] the chief political director of the Czechoslovak metallurgic industry, Fr. Kacha, in 1951. Kopecky, especially, criticized Slansky in this respect. It was the general opinion that the ruling power within Czechoslovakia was centered in the UV KSC and not in the Government. 50X1-HUM
31. Zapotocky considered this tactical approach of Slansky detrimental both to the Party and to the building of socialism in Czechoslovakia, and, therefore, joined forces with Gottwald in order to weaken Slansky's hegemony. It is open to question if Zapotocky fully agreed with the arrest of Slansky and his followers as agents of the West since in the case of Vladimir Clementis he had suggested that a less drastic measure be taken. The fact remains that it was Zapotocky who signed the warrant for Slansky's arrest. This fact, however, does not constitute sufficient proof that Zapotocky agreed with this measure of Gottwald's, since it is always he who is called upon to announce unpopular measures. This is well known among his followers, who do not condemn Zapotocky for the government measures he makes public.
32. The Slansky purge has been so extensive that even the persons but slightly suspected of being followers of Slansky, or of having a critical attitude about Soviet policies, have been arrested. It is possible to deduce that Gottwald was given a free hand by Moscow to create order within Czechoslovakia. The results, however, have been far from satisfactory from Moscow's point of view, as indicated by the following.
- Labor morale and efficiency still have a declining tendency.
 - Even the mass mobilization of various population strata into production, especially of women, has not raised production to the level anticipated by the Five-Year Plan.
 - Declining production, which has become chronic in Czechoslovakia, is responsible for the failure of Czechoslovakia to fulfill the obligations imposed by Moscow for the rearmament of the satellites which do not as yet have war industries of their own. This failure hampers the USSR considerably in its war preparations since it is one of the chief tasks of Czechoslovakia to produce arms and other war material, and not to form a large army. In this connection Zapotocky [redacted] for the time being, did not believe in the possibility of war between the USSR and the US. He stated that it was necessary for Czechoslovakia to build up its industry, which is of greater importance than the creation of an exceedingly large Czechoslovak army. Frantisek Kalkus, former UV KSC member and head of the Civil Servants Association of URO, [redacted] as early as 1950 that the main task of Czechoslovakia in the event of war would not be to create a large Czechoslovak army but to produce arms and war materials. Since Czechoslovakia had the greatest number of specially qualified workmen for this type of work and since such workmen were scarce in the USSR and the other satellite states, it would be a pity to use them as soldiers. 50X1-HUM
 - The standard of living in Czechoslovakia is continually declining. This leads to a gradual deterioration of political morale which is evident from the constantly decreasing attendance at KSC meetings.
33. As economic conditions within Czechoslovakia have not improved since the arrest of Slansky, Zorin was sent to Prague in May 1952 to ascertain the situation. Gottwald has been "sick" for a considerable time, and does not

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appear in public. Today, Zapotocky appears before the public as the de facto head of the state. Prior to Gottwald's "sickness" it was Zapotocky who did not appear officially in public.

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[redacted] first secretary of the Polish Embassy in Rome, Zapotocky was sharply criticized during a secret session of the Cominform in January, 1952, in Warsaw, for the failure of Czechoslovakia to fulfill its obligations to the USSR and other satellites. As a result of this, Zapotocky was called to Moscow in February, 1952, together with Minister of Foreign Trade Antonin Gregor, to report on the economic and political situation in Czechoslovakia.

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34.

The temporary "illnesses" first of Zapotocky, and, at the present time, of Gottwald have a direct connection with the case of Slansky and his followers. Moscow is now reviewing the advisability of Slansky's arrest in view of the fact that Gottwald's and Zapotocky's hopes regarding an improvement of the political and economic situation have not materialized. It is for this reason that the trial of Slansky, which was to have been staged in the latter half of April, has been postponed for an indefinite period of time. In this connection, other political surprises may come; as for example, treatment of Gottwald in the USSR, or Zapotocky becoming so ill as to prevent him from fulfilling his duties as Premier, etc. All of this will depend on the report Zorin will forward to the Kremlin.

35.

[redacted] additional purges within the leadership of the KSC will not bring about the results Moscow expects from Czechoslovakia. [redacted] such purges can only lead to further deterioration of the internal economic and political situation. Gottwald, and to even a greater degree, Zapotocky, today enjoy a certain popularity within Czechoslovakia; their removal would do more harm than good. If they are liquidated in the future, it will indicate that the international political situation has become so grave that the USSR has no time to consider advantages and disadvantages of such measures, and is using methods usually adopted in handling occupied countries in time of war.

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